

Discover Duxbury

Trails, hills and hikes

Exploring the Town's green forests, various wetlands and hills.

By Aaron Carr, Sports Reporter

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Round Pond is a local favorite. Courtesy Photo

Home to notable parcels of conservation land, Duxbury offers an abundance of locations to explore if you're in the mood for walking and hiking trails.

Embody the message of "Discover Duxbury" by exploring the Town's green forests, its various wetlands and sloping hills.

North Hill Marsh

Located on Mayflower Street, the North Hill Marsh provides walkers and hikers with plenty of acreage to stretch their legs. With 90 acres of reservoirs and marsh and 30 acres of upland, the most far-reaching trails in Duxbury are located right here. Primarily a wildlife sanctuary,

bird watchers may want to venture to one of the observation decks as herons, hawks, owls and ospreys fly through the area. Ducks and geese can be spotted here as well.

The Pond Loop, circling North Hill Marsh, offers pond, cranberry bog and woodland views. A portion of the trail on the east side of the marsh is a spot on the historic 1623 "Green Harbor Trail" stretching from Plymouth to Marshfield.

The Fredrick B. Knapp Town Forest, an 80-acre stand of tall pines, can be accessed in this area. Hikers can move freely under the canopy formed by the tall, white pines as there is little undergrowth in the forest. Named after the former Head Master of the Powder Point School for Boys, Knapp urged officials to preserve the land to create a town forest. Duxbury purchased the land in August of 1929 and named the forest after Knapp four years later.

Purchased by the town in 1986, the Waiting Hill Preserve was named after Waiting Hill – the tallest point in the 120-acre patch of nature. At 140-feet tall, Waiting Hill is the second-highest hill in town after 180-foot Captain's Hill located on Standish Shore.

Bay Farm Consequancy Area

Whether you're a bird watcher, dog walker or casual stroller, the Bay Farm Conservation area offers a multitude of hiking options.

With 80 acres of land to explore, hikers can find a sandy beach, a rocky ledge, marshland and a rolling countryside grassland that provides onlookers an unbeatable view of the bay.

Animal enthusiasts can spy a variety of critters and birds while wandering around. Bobolinks sing and red-tailed hawks cry out in search of a snack. Fox and coyote can turn the open fields into a hunting ground. White-tailed deer have been known to graze in the area. Night hikers may want to pack a jar with them to catch fireflies.

Round Pond

Purchased in 1890 by the group that became the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society of today, Round Pond is one of the more renowned recreation spots for Duxbury residents and visitors alike.

With conservation land totaling 170 acres, the area includes a variety of walking paths between Round Pond, Pine Lake and Island Creek Pond.

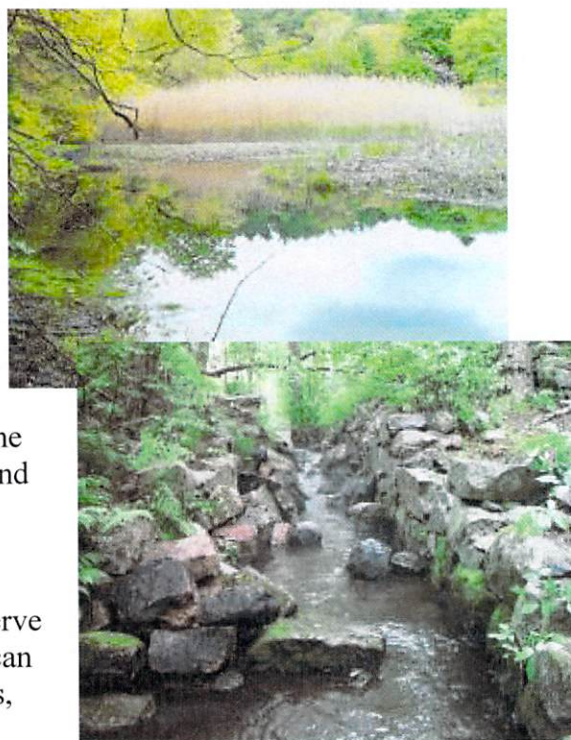
Another optimal spot for animal lovers, the Round Pond area is home to waterfowl, whitetailed deer, raccoons, opossums, fox, osprey, red-tailed hawks, bluebirds, egrets, great blue herons, cardinals and chickadees.

In 2011, as a tribute to former Duxbury Clipper publisher and conservation land advocate David Cutler, the Town of Duxbury dedicated a patch of land adjacent to the pond as the “David S. Cutler Forest.”

Lansing Bennett Forest

Named after Dr. Lansing Bennett, chair of the Duxbury Conservation Commission from 1967-1979, the Lansing Bennett Forest contains 344 acres. Folks can access the Bay Circuit Trail from the Forest. At 200 miles in length, the trail stretches between routes 95 (route 128) and 495 to form a semicircle around Boston. The trail is comprised of 79 areas of green space from Plum Island in Newburyport to Duxbury’s Bay Farm.

If you’ve had your fill of birds and land mammals, check out the reptiles and amphibians in the wetlands. A variety of turtles, salamanders, frogs and toads inhabit the area among the rocks and logs. The 1.8-mile long Phillips Brook is flush with wild brook and brown trout.



Captain David Cushman, Jr. Preserve

Part of the Wildlands Trust, the Cushman Preserve sits along the banks of the Blue Fish River and hikers can see excellent views of the River and salt marsh. Herons, egrets and ducks float on the water. Shorebirds like yellowlegs, plovers and killdeer can be spotted at low tide. “It’s a walk through a variety of habitats,” said Malcolm MacGregor, the “Trail Guy” at Wildlands Trust. “You have grassland, woodlands and salt marsh. The views from Cushman are what stand out. There are some really nice views here. The salt marsh is spectacular.”

“Cushman is a moderate to easy hike,” added MacGregor.

Cow Tent Mill Preserve (top) and Lansing Bennett Forest (bottom) are excellent hiking spots

Photo Courtesy of the Wildlands Trust
Bay Farm Conservation Area

Cow Tent Hill Preserve

Another part of the Wildlands Trust, Cow Tent Hill Preserve borders both sides of Duck Hill River. Named after the 19th century practice of creating canvas to shade grazing cows, the area is home to hills that offer views across the Duxbury Marsh, a large area of salt marsh at the head of the bay.

The breeze from Duxbury Bay cools down hikers examining the white pine forest. Hikers are urged to stay on the trail as poison ivy is a fixture in the forest.

“Cow Tent Hill provides a nice, short stroll with beautiful views of marshland off of Tremont Street in Duxbury,” MacGregor said. “It’s very easy hiking. Cow Tent Hill is a bit of a hill, it’s higher than everything around it, but it’s not extreme my any means.”

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